WALLOONIA, HOME OF HEROES FOR CENTURIES

Defenders of Liege, Who Have Been Repeating History, Are of Same Stock That Settled New York

By WILLIAM ELLIOT GRIFFIS.

LIEGE and its defenders have only been repeating history. For centuries the Walloons have proved their courage in defence of their homes and their principles. They are of special interest to New Yorkers because they are of the same stock that settled New York and the Middle States.

"Geography is the preface of War." Liege is but 30 miles from Germany and Paris but 250. A conflict precipitated by three Emperors may change human history. As at Waterloo a century ago, so to-day the decisive battle may be fought in the land of the Flemings and Walloons. It was the Belgians at Quatre Bras in 1815 who prevented the French from separating Blucher and Wellington and thus made Waterloo.

Belgium, with two notably contrasting landscapes, is a country of two ethnic stocks and languages. It is a land of farmers and mechanics and is dependent upon husbandry and industry. Draw a line east and west. Roughly, all north of this are the Flemings, with farms and gardens, great cities and the country's chief seaport, Antwerp. Dutch is spoken, and the people in the main are of Teutonic stock, like their neighbors the Netherlanders.

South of this line of Flanderland is Walloonia, or Liegeland: which is a great factory with mines and machine shops. Here live the Walloons, or Gaulloons, who speak French. In the main they are the descendants of the Belgii, the men who first faced the legions of Rome under Julius Cæsar. The Flemings in the north are emigrants from the ancient German forests; but the Walloons are indigenous, natives of that soil which they are defending to-day, as in their aeons of unlettered unsavagery.

Through all the centuries, because of unfortunate geographical situation, the people of Belgic land have borne the yoke of many foreign conquerors, yet they have ever cherished their native land and soil. Despite all the attempts of foreign rulers to reduce Belgium to a geographical expression, the people on the soil feel that they are a nation. Whether Fleming or Walloon, they have ever joined shoulder to shoulder to keep Belgic land a separate State. In A. D. 1914 they have given proof of their courage in resisting the invader.

Situated between two peoples, Gallic and Teuton, that have never ended their feud, it seemed almost incredible that a nation could arise in the land of the Scheldt and the Sambre. Yet it did. Indeed Belgium, now the most thickly populated country in the world, is the miracle of history.

At Waterloo the Belgians, with the allied armies, were skilfully handled by Col. Bylandt and fought bravely and acted as did the Union armies at Gettysburg. On June 16 at Quatre Bras the Netherlanders, losing over 1,000 men, bore the brunt of the battle without any British support, until 3:30 P. M. In fact, it was Perponcher's march to Quatre Bras, instead of to Nivelles, as ordered by Wellington, that checked the French advance under Ney, which would have prevented the junction of Blucher and Wellington. When, however, the French got their artillery into line and full play Col. Bylandt wisely withdrew his men out of range.

Two days later the Dutch and Belgians met Marshal Ney's magnificent charge of 15,000 men and gave way after heavy loss. Nevertheless they kept their ranks, reformed again, entered the battle, fighting to the end. In a word, in the first place, they did what they repeated in 1914, held back a great army, so that the invaders lost Aime. In the second instance they did very much what Meade's soldiers at Gettysburg did when, seeing the advancing host under Pickett, the Union men retired to the guns and then reformed to repulse the Confederates.

Twenty years after the battle of Waterloo, amid the hatreds and jealousies engendered in Holland by the Belgian War of Independence, when "Rotterdam bombarded Antwerp," a story was started which, reflecting upon the Belgian infantry of 1815, charged them with cowardice. This yarn was seized upon by Thackeray, who in his novel of "Vanity Fair" introduced as a typical Belgian an amusing character, one Regulus Van Cutsum. This carpet knight, who before powder was burned was exceedingly valiant both in eating the delicious pies baked in the kitchens of Brussels and in promising great things to the maids who fed him, ran away most lustily when the battle fire opened.

All this is very funny. Yet though Baedeker repeats Thackeray and Englishmen swallowed fiction as fact, the documents of the time and official and popular accounts show that these native Belgians bravely held their own at Waterloo. They were no more cowardly than the Union soldiers were, when, handled skilfully, they were ordered to retire under cover of Hunt's artillery posted on Cemetery Ridge.

The Walloon soldier has been a striking figure in scores of wars in which his courage was put to the test. His frequent comrade in arms, the refugee from Ireland, was called in compliment "the Irish Walloon." Through centuries his character for industry and courage, firmness of purpose and his good reputation for many noble qualities have been too clearly indicated to be more than temporarily obscured by Thackeray or Baedeker.

If anything were needed to rehabilitate the Belgian soldier the splendid exhibition of valor made by him at Liege in August, 1914, against the invading Germans were enough. All aspersions upon his courage should now be forgotten. New York should be proud of her first settlers.

Those who studied the psychology of the great industrial strike of April, 1913, which, like the war for independence in 1830, was initiated by the Walloons and carried by them to complete success, will understand how well the Belgians were prepared to give the world assurance of their courage, even before a German army crops. Defeated at the elections, not by manhood suffrage but by a hostile majority gained by plural voting, and unable to secure justice by normal methods, the workmen began the organization of a general demonstration of protest.

They determined to secure a reform in the law of franchise that would mean manhood suffrage and give to each male one vote instead of, as has been the rule, two votes or three votes to men who, like priests and professionals, had taken university degrees. On April 14 about 350,000 men, nearly all Walloons and most of them miners, quit work. The strike, spreading to other industries, was maintained by over a half million men under superb self-control.

With such perfect order was this revolt against injustice conducted, without any violence or destruction of property, that the Government, unable to make any reasonable objection or to employ force, yielded, promising to abolish plural voting in provincial and communal elections. The strike ended after ten days. This successful and peaceful campaign revealed the Walloon character in an attractive light.

To understand both the amazing rapidity with which the Germans penetrated Belgium—only to find her forts and soldiers so well prepared—we must recall the Algeciras incident of 1911, when hostilities between France and Germany were expected every moment. The great fortresses at Liege were built in 1890 at a cost of $25,000,000, with disappearing guns of heavy calibre, to block the advance from the western frontier of a German army. Yet only a nominal garrison of sergeants and privates, few in number, acted as caretakers of these wonders of steel and concrete.

When the tense and hot situation cooled a party of Belgians sauntering over the frontier into Germany found covered up under the sand a railway to the very border. On this concealed road, easily uncovered and utilized, and over the main line to Paris an army could drop into Belgium as unexpectedly as if from the clouds. Moreover, a prominent German military author about that time declared that Belgium's neutrality was but a "paper bulwark."

From that moment the forts were properly garrisoned, ammunition was stored and troops kept near the frontier so that the "paper bulwark" might be one of blood and steel. Besides, rambling repeatedly in the neighborhood of these fortifications, I have been impressed with the fine discipline of the Belgian army, especially in the cavalry and artillery.

Liege, then, the capital of Walloonland, is the western door of the national house, which, properly guarded and nobly defended by steel domed concrete forts, has, for a time at least, disarranged the plans of invaders who were ruthlessly attempting to violate Belgian neutrality in order to reach France and her treasure hastily. The Walloon is the hero of the day in what promises to be the world's greatest war.

Americans as a rule do not know much about Belgium. How many, for example, realize that the initial homemakers in the four States of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware were Walloon people from the Belgic Netherlands? The first women and children on Manhattan Island and the Middle States were not Dutch but French speaking Walloons.

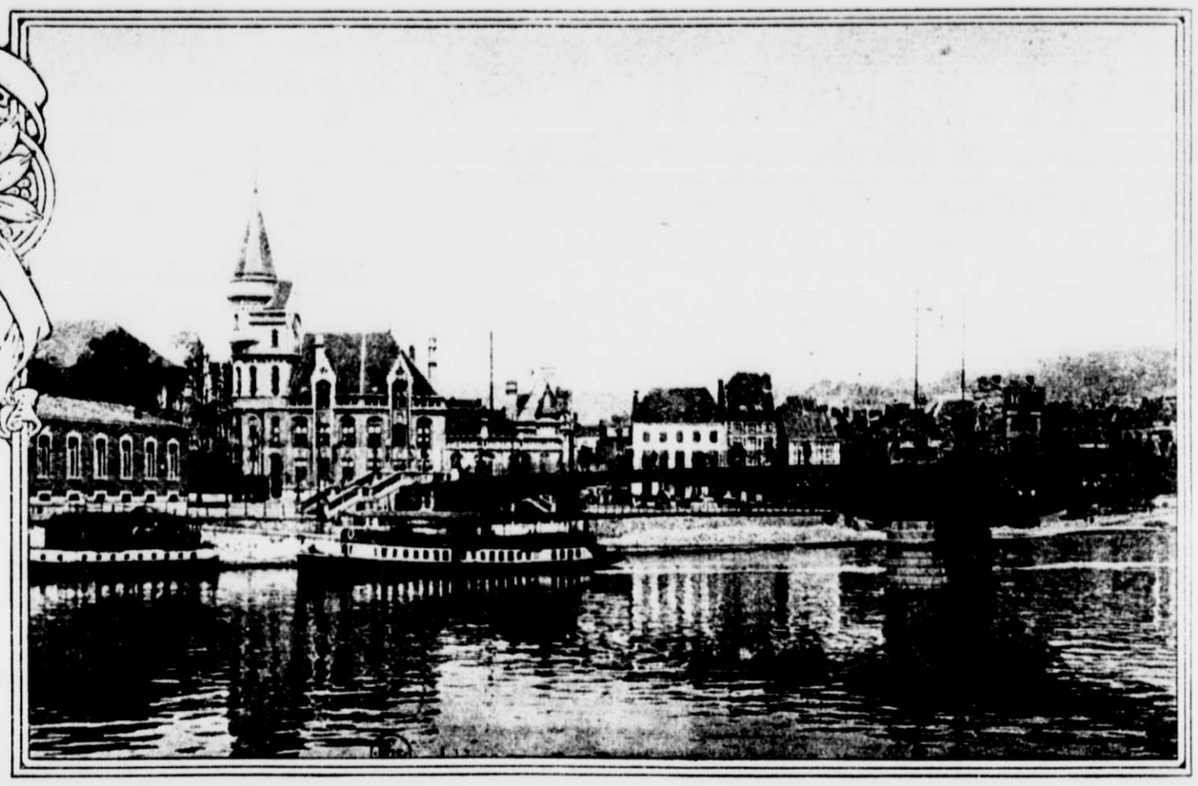
These refugees, for conscience sake, fled from before Alva and out of Belgic land into Holland, whence they reached America. Their leader and the promoter of this enterprise of emigration was Jesse de Forest, the ancestor of most of the De Forests in the United States. If any one can be called the founder of New York city it is Jesse de Forest.

Driven out from his home in Avesnes (now in France, but then in Walloon Belgium), his flight can be traced from communion table to communion table when Spain and Alva were extending their iron rule over the consciences of men. With his children De Forest sought refuge under the red, white and blue flag of the Dutch Republic.

After Henry Hudson's return from America he enrolled Walloon emigrants and tried to get King James of England to allow his fellow countrymen to settle the new country, but "the wisest fool in Christendom" was too arbitrary in his stipulations. So Jesse de Forest applied to the Dutch West India company, which in 1623 fitted out the famous new, beautiful, clean ship New Netherland, which brought the Walloons, the first men with wives and children that had yet come from the Netherlands into the Hudson and Delaware regions. It can be truly said that New York and the Middle States were not first settled by the Dutch people, but by those French speaking Walloons, of the same stock as the brave defenders of Liege in 1914.

Belgium cavalry.

Church of St. Paul in Liege.



The bridge into Liege.

Walloon land.

Revelations of Kaiser's Personal Spy

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changed somewhat, and Churchill drew Tirpitz aside. Churchill spoke German only indifferently, so they conversed in French and partly in English. I heard Tirpitz say:

"We could bottle up the Baltic in twelve hours. Russia would not have a chance to stir. Of course, in the event of any outside situation arising we shall look to England to take care of such new condition. That seems to rest clearly with your navy."

Churchill became a little cautious.

"There is a certain contingency that might arise," he said. "Suppose, under stress of circumstances the United States should take a definite stand against us in this matter?"

The reply of the Admiral was the very expressive German word Quatsch! He further intimated that the United States was so interested in its own internal affairs that it would not be drawn into the question, and that in any event its navy would be needed for its own immediate protection. He had a disposition, however, to put the entire situation up to Churchill.

Kiderlen-Waechter and Moritz were deep in the Balkan question and I sensed their the coming Balkan imbroglio.

"Without doubt," Moritz said, "we will bring that to an issue within a few months." I knew he meant that Austria would precipitate the Balkan question. Kiderlen-Waechter was serious.

"It has got to be done."

There were other snatches, all bearing on the same subject, and gradually the situation began to clarify in my mind. It was not, however, until I had noted the contents of certain documents before destroying them that the tremendous importance of the big stakes they were all playing for became apparent. What I shall now do is to reveal the substance of these documents, coupling them with overheard conversation, thus interpreting the full significance of the conference.

Within the last twenty-five years Germany has so enormously advanced in commerce that she urgently needs some further outlet on the northern seacoast. This means Holland and Belgium. Hamburg and Bremen are the only two practical harbors that Germany possesses for the distribution of her enormous export. The congestion in both places is such that steamers wait for weeks to load.

One quarter of Germany's exports goes through Antwerp. Germany must have Antwerp. Practically the whole of southern Germany's commerce, especially along the Rhine and the highway of the Rhine, pours into a foreign country at present. Germany must have Antwerp—in fact, the whole coast, Amsterdam and Rotterdam included.

The empire wants harbors, not colonies. The colonizing idea is a fallacy. Germany is, first and last, a manufacturing country. It never was and never will be for a long time to come a successful colonizer. At present all that Germany wants is markets and facilities for extending her markets.

These markets Germany will always be able to command because of her intense scientific application to all branches of manufacture. But these products need outlets. Germany is quite willing to let the others colonize so long as she has a chance to get her goods in. So much for the German situation.

England, in her vast over sea domains and possessions, wants rounding up. England has not been able in the past, and certainly is not at present, to supply herself and her colonies. In Germany she has a first class workman; Germany manufactures what England needs. At least she did before the present war came, and so she will again when peace returns.

Germany's building of her navy was never meant as a real menace to Great Britain. It was solely a means to impress the English that Germany would make a powerful and valuable ally in every shape and form. Conversely, it was a threat that she would be a dangerous opponent.

Shoulder to shoulder, Germany and England (Germany of course including Austria and probably Italy) could dictate to the rest of the world. There was one stumbling block. This was France.

Well informed Frenchmen have known and feared this for a long time. They have of course never mentioned it in public. With all her gallantry, hysterical patriotism and wealth, France would never be able to hold out against Germany alone. To secure Russia's friendship she loaned enormous sums of money.

But the Japanese war and internal troubles temporarily eliminated Russia as a high class ally. She was at the time of the Black Forest conference but a secondary Power. So France did her utmost to solidify the Entente Cordiale fostered by the late King Edward VII, under the stress of public opinion in England.

As I made clear last week in my story of my secret mission to the captain of the German cruiser Panther, the Moroccan question showed England ready to back up France in war; but now came this meeting in the Black Forest. Germany pointing out to and apparently convincing England of the greater advantage of a German-English coalition, and France was frozen out—at least so Germany was led to believe, and with what error England's support of France and Russia in the present war with Germany makes all too glaring. England, with her traditional shrewd alertness to make the most profitable deal, Germany reasoned, was not slow to see the advantage of the German proposition. In a nutshell, it was this:

Germany must have the lowland ports. Holland would not be averse to coming into the German federation. Belgium would be averse, but could be snuffed out as easily as a candle. But French public opinion would never tolerate under any circumstances this German aggression. France would fight, even though knowing it to be a losing fight.

So much for what Germany would get out of it. Austria wants to round up her empire in the Balkans. Austria was to have outlets in the Mediterranean. England, for standing by Germany, was to be rewarded with French Northern Africa and the Dutch East India possessions. What was to become of France? Reconstruction, partitioning, possibly a little kingdom, probably under the Orleans regime.

I know these things, for I possess them in black and white. But what I do not know is whether England entered this memorable conference in order to play the spy on Germany and her Austrian ally in behalf of herself and France or really acceded to the isolation of France temporarily for secret purposes of her own, knowing that Germany would not be ready to strike for some time to come.

But I strongly suspect that she dealt doubly with Germany, and that France knew of her ancient enemy's proposition to England within a very few hours after Lord Haldane and Winston Churchill had heard it, and began forthwith to make herself as ready as possible against the day when Germany, her plans all perfected and falsely relying on England's aloofness, would try to put them into effect.

Do you recall how Germany, at the very beginning of the present war, began to hurl her army corps upon France by way of neutral Belgium? I cannot help believing that to the last Germany felt herself safe in so doing—secure in the belief that England would not object—and all because of that secret meeting in the Black Forest I have told you of.

Japan Land of Farmers and Fishers

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carried baskets or babies on their backs. The little children took great joy observing the "big foreigner."

The scene seaward was full of beauty, the spread of ocean in every shade of green deepening to the blue and purple beyond. Over the headland in the distance high in air shone Mount Fuji, still wearing her silver crown of snow against the soft blue sky, with Enoshima Islands below and to the left.

I got a few small photographs and I wanted another greatly. As I turned toward the houses I saw approaching a handsome faced woman of the village, unusually tall, a fine form showing through her close clinging, breeze blown drapery of some soft texture that wrinkled as she moved in wonderful little rippling folds. Her step was long and bold and her ankles bare. She bore a basket on her back and in her hand a tall staff. Some soft white cloth was around her hair. She made a surprisingly beautiful picture as she came royally over the sands—something of the dignity and much of the figure of the Venus de Milo about her.

I reached for the camera, but a number of elderly women sitting in a group—envious old persons—shouted something to her. She turned startled eyes on me; ran over to them and slipped down to the sand. Alas!

Off the beach were a score of great baskets six feet across in which they keep live fish. Sardines are netted close in; octopus are taken in earthen jars into which they crawl and from which they are unable to come out and be eaten. Tai is found fifteen miles out, and suzuki, also a good fish, not so far. About sixty fish dealers take the catch to town, showing how every industry is subdivided in Japan.

Prof. Inazo Nitobe, who lectured in America so successfully two years ago, is living here in Tokio now. As part of his general high scholarship he is a great authority on alimentation, and I cannot do better than close this letter with the result of a talk with him on the foodstuffs of Japan.

"It has been said that the Japanese nation, and in particular the workingman, lives on rice and that this is the national staff of life. While it is true that in quantity rice forms the principal part of their meals, still the Japanese worker could not do without 'miso,' a ferment of beans and barley usually served in the form of soup with some pickled white radish called 'daikon.'

"The workingmen say that no matter how many bowls of rice they may consume at breakfast, without miso they would not be strong enough to do a hard day's work. This, it has recently been discovered, is based on scientific grounds, for without miso their breakfast would consist entirely of hydrocarbons, starchy heat producing elements, and the miso being composed of fermented beans and barley supplies the nitrogenous elements that give strength and energy to the human frame.

"Fish both cooked and raw is also an important food element that the Japanese requires for his lunch and supper. This, like miso, is a food that supplies the nitrogenous elements, and so in the Japanese dietary there is preserved a proper balance between the starchy and the nitrogenous foods.

"Living on these foods develops a great liking for daikon, the pickled white radish, something that foreigners find unpleasant to eat. It has been found to contain a good deal of diastase, which is a great aid in the digestion of starchy foods, as it assists in the conversion of starch into sugar, which is very necessary when rice forms so large a part of their meals. Green tea, without milk or sugar, is consumed at every meal, and this is undoubtedly the purest and least harmful form of tea.

"From the foregoing it can be seen that the Japanese have unconsciously been living on a very well balanced diet that supplies the food elements in just proportion. The average diet of the Japanese workingman would, therefore, be something as follows:

Breakfast—Rice, miso, daikon, tea.

Lunch—Rice, daikon, fish, tea.

Supper (the principal meal)—Rice, daikon, vegetables, fish, tea.

"Cups of green tea are consumed during the day.

"Much of the Japanese [illegible] flavored with 'catsubushi,' a [illegible] bonito fish that is steamed and [illegible] until it is as hard as wood. Shavings are made of this by drawing it over a machine that looks something like a plane that is used for smoothing lumber, with this difference, that the machine is turned upside down and remains stationary while the [illegible] of 'catsubushi' about four or five inches in length and about an inch thick is drawn over the knife. The flavor of the shavings give to Japanese dishes is much liked by the people, but is a little monotonous to the foreigner.

"This, with 'shoyu,' a sauce made from salted and fermented [illegible] to taste something like a mild Worcestershire, forms practically the only seasoning used in Japanese cooking. The Japanese have in all probability followed the simplest and least modified form of preparing and serving food."

Wherever they get it or how they compound it, their food furnishes them lots of steam, with enough surplus to cover their bones nicely.